

# Large Rachmaninoff Audience Shows City Is Music-Minded

By George Harris

Some years ago the question used to be raised as to whether Richmond was musical or not. There seems lately to have been less provocation for its being raised, but I cannot resist referring to it again for the sake of giving a strong affirmative, made possible by the very large and enthusiastic audience that heard Serge Rachmaninoff at the Mosque last night. In choosing him as one of the artists in its series this season, the Civic Musical Association of Richmond brought a man whose pure and straightforward art is not dressed up by any of the modern accessories that increase fame and popularity—a fact that compliments both Mr. Rachmaninoff and Richmond.

This great man, one of the great musical figures of the age, brings to his playing of the piano the broad understanding of the creative genius, whose one thought is music and its proper meaning. Last night, as Mr. Rachmaninoff performed, it seemed as if he were playing easily—almost casually, but perfectly, because music could never be anything less to him. It was the music itself, the instrument being of secondary importance, although there was a great deal in the program that was pianistically brilliant.

Last night's program was made up of alternations of the classical dance suite type with its slight austerity and the romantic school of more projected emotion with its warmer color of harmony and pianism. As an introduction to the Italian Concerto by Bach, we heard a Liszt composition

based on a melody by Bach, thus leading us to the great classicist through an explanation of him nearer to our own thought. The Bach number then came as a stupendous thing, forceful in straightforwardness in two movements, and presenting in the middle one an abstractly pathetic

melody, romantic in its essence, but not sentimental.

Chopin was the first representative of the romantic school, his Nocturne in F major being deeply and simply musical, the Impromptu in A flat being speeded up almost beyond clear audibility, and ending, after two short dances, with the Scherzo in C sharp minor, which was a thing of beauty and exciting glory. The older dance suite form reappeared in a suite by Debussy, where richer harmonies lessened the austerity; but still it is a somewhat removed mood that does not touch on the personal. It has its own peculiar beauty, made poignant by last night's performance. Then again at the end came the romantic spirit, with all the warm color and feeling found in Liszt, brought to us by the dazzling medium of Mr. Rachmaninoff's playing. The delight of the audience brought as

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